

Office of Tourism

Agency Number 06-267

Fiscal Year 2008-2009 through 2012-2013

Agency Mission Statement

The mission of the Office of Tourism is:

1. to promote and assist expansion of tourism and the tourism industry in Louisiana;
2. to increase employment opportunities for all citizens throughout the state through the orderly but accelerated development of facilities for tourism, travel and hospitality;
3. to invite visitors from this nation and foreign countries to visit Louisiana; and
4. to conduct an ongoing promotional campaign of information, advertising and publicity to create and sustain a positive image and understanding of Louisiana (R.S. 15:1255); and re-image Louisiana as a great place to live, work, and play.

The agency performs these functions for the benefit of all Louisiana citizens and visitors.

Agency Goals

1. The Office of Tourism will increase the economic impact of travel on Louisiana by 2013.
2. The Office of Tourism will increase the awareness of Louisiana as a travel destination by 2013.

Program A. Administration

Program Mission

The mission of the Administration Program of the Office of Tourism is to coordinate the efforts and initiatives of the other programs in the Office of Tourism with the advertising agency, the other agencies within the department, and other public and private travel industry partners in order to achieve the greatest impact on the tourism industry in Louisiana.

Program Goal

The Administration Program will derive the maximum return on investment from the dollars invested in tourism advertising and promotion by the Office of Tourism.

Program Objective 1.	Increase the amount of spending by visitors by 20% from \$8.1 billion in 2005 to \$9.7 billion in 2013.
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Strategies

- 1.1 Seek out best practices, innovative solutions and models for efficiency to better manage the Office of Tourism.
- 1.2 Establish ambitious but realistic annual goals for the advertising agency, and require the agency to report progress on these goals.
- 1.3 Coordinate all programs within the Office of Tourism to ensure maximum efficiency of resources in meeting all goals and objectives.
- 1.4 Establish regular benchmarks/standards for quality of performance by the advertising agency such as cost per inquiry, total inquiries and advertising recall, and insure that these benchmarks/standards are driving the direction of the advertising.
- 1.5 Establish deadlines for various action plans and provide incentives for meeting those deadlines.
- 1.6 Improve the communications between the advertising agency and the Office of Tourism through weekly meetings.
- 1.7 Review and develop existing tourism website and make improvements that afford visitors a state-of-the-art experience as well as access to up-to-date information.
- 1.8 Seek out innovative technologies that provide better customer service opportunities, attract new markets and assist with other tourism marketing initiatives.
- 1.9 Work with the Louisiana Retirement Development Commission to position Louisiana as a great place to visit and retire.

Indicators:

Input	State ranking for tourism office budget.
Output	Number of visitors to Louisiana. Number of consumer inquiries.
Outcome	Amount of expenditures in Louisiana by all visitors.
Efficiency	Advertising Return-on-Investment.

Program B. Marketing

Program Mission

It is the mission of the marketing program of the Office of Tourism to provide advertising and publicity for the assets of the state of Louisiana; to design, produce, and distribute advertising materials in all media; and to reach as many potential tourists as possible with an invitation to visit Louisiana.

Program Goals

1. The Marketing Program will increase the number of visitors to Louisiana by 2013.
2. The Marketing Program will increase the number of jobs in the tourism industry by 2013.

Program Objectives

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| Objective 1. | Increase the number of visitors to Louisiana by 40% from 18.7 million in 2005 to 26.5 million in 2013. |
| Objective 2. | Increase the number of jobs within the Louisiana tourism industry by 20 percent from 110,000 in 2005 to 132,000 in 2013. |
| Objective 3. | Achieve an average turn around time of two weeks for all domestic advertising related inquiries from receipt of inquiry to delivery by mail. |

Program Objective 1.	Increase the number of visitors to Louisiana by 40% from 18.7 million in 2005 to 26.4 million in 2013.
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Strategies

- 1.1 Contract with a professional advertising and marketing firm to develop and implement, in conjunction with LOT, a master plan for marketing tourism.
- 1.2 Explore new and emerging domestic and international markets.
- 1.3 Increase the number of international and domestic sales blitzes.
- 1.4 Continue LOT's presence at strategically important domestic and international trade shows.
- 1.4 Continue ongoing support of new events, attractions and special events within Louisiana; for example, LOT has annually contributed technical assistance to rural tourism commissions in which tourism is just getting started and assist with grant writing.
- 1.5 Target minority visitors, specifically African-Americans, with consumer and trade advertising and special promotions.
- 1.6 Coordinate marketing programs with the convention and visitor bureaus.
- 1.7 Evaluate and update annually the information contained within the Louisiana Tour Guide, Louisiana State Map and other brochures used for fulfillment of inquiries.
- 1.8 Capitalize on America's WETLAND Campaign to create new tourism and media opportunities.
- 1.9 Evaluate traditional tourism advertising and reevaluate prohibition on in-state advertising.
- 1.10 Create strong umbrella themes and messages to promote Louisiana like a top ten vacation destination.
- 1.11 Create a broader brand for Louisiana that includes history, ecology and culture.
- 1.12 Develop and promote programs that encourage longer overnight visitation.
- 1.13 Target outdoor recreation and family sports markets.
- 1.14 Develop more opportunities between Latin America and Louisiana.
- 1.15 Thoroughly monitor all advertising results through various annual research methods such as conversion studies, post-wave ad tracking surveys, inquiry tracking reports and focus groups, and utilize the findings from the research to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the advertising.
- 1.16 Coordinate the designation of scenic byways, review grant applications, develop value added products from scenic byways systems and advertise scenic byways to promote the use of Louisiana's most scenic roadways.
- 1.17 Continue to support the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area.

Indicators:

Output	Number of U.S. resident visitors. Number of Canadian and overseas visitors. Number of consumer inquiries.
Outcome	Amount of expenditures in La. by U.S. resident visitors. Amount of expenditures in La. by international visitors.

Efficiency **Amount of state taxes generated from visitor spending.**
Ad Recall.

Program Objective 2.	Increase the number of jobs within the Louisiana tourism industry by 20 percent from 110,000 in 2005 to 132,000 in 2013.
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Strategies

- 2.1 Create a product development program which includes local community assessments, individual private sector assistance with marketing plans and the assessment of grant availability.
- 2.2 Participate in an annual travel summit sponsored by the Louisiana Travel Promotion Association and thereby increase the industry's professional expertise in marketing, promoting and developing tourism.
- 2.3 Continue sponsorship and marketing cooperative opportunities with private-sector sponsors.
- 2.4 Establish standards with common vocabulary and develop programs to educate attraction operators about Louisiana travel opportunities.
- 2.5 Encourage more cruise lines, airlines and hotel chains to expand business into Louisiana.
- 2.6 Focus on Mississippi River region as tourism engine and revisit tourism strategies of the Delta initiatives.
- 2.7 Consider potential of regional military populations as a target market and the development of a Military Trails initiative.
- 2.8 Collaborate with local communities to prepare employees for business opportunities and to attract visitors interested in Louisiana tourism activities.
- 2.9 Host seminars and develop training materials for local government and CVBs to ensure consistent messages and access to Louisiana tourism experiences and opportunities.
- 2.10 Continue to administer and monitor Atchafalaya Trace Heritage Area tax credit program.
- 2.11 Offer assistance with grant writing.
- 2.12 Develop other educational outreach programs for the Louisiana tourism industry.

Indicators:

Input	Supply of hotel rooms. Number of cruise lines.
Outcome	Number of people employed directly in travel and tourism in La.
Efficiency	Hotel room demand.

Program Objective 3.	Achieve an average turn around time of two weeks for all domestic advertising related inquiries from receipt of inquiry to delivery by mail.
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Strategies

- 3.1** Provide staff with a sufficient quantity of tour guides, state maps and other brochures to handle all inquiries without delays and for use at trade shows and sales blitzes.
- 3.2** Insure adequate communication between the Office of Tourism, advertising agencies, and telemarketing firm so that mail-handling issues can be minimized.
- 3.3** Utilize a media ad placement schedule in which inquiries are generated in a timely and manageable time frame.
- 3.4** Utilize the most appropriate mail/delivery systems and discounts to provide rapid and cost-efficient delivery of inquiry packets.

Indicators:

- Output** Number of bulk-rate packets mailed.
- Outcome** Average turnaround time.
- Efficiency** Average cost per inquiry packet.

Program C. Welcome Centers

Program Mission

The mission of Louisiana's Welcome Centers, located along major highways entering the state and in two of Louisiana's largest cities, is to provide a safe, friendly environment in which to welcome visitors and provide them information about area attractions, and to encourage them to spend more time in the state.

Program Goals

1. The Welcome Center Program will provide a safer, friendlier environment in which an increasing number of travelers can learn more about Louisiana's food, culture and attractions.
2. The Welcome Center Program will provide the highest quality customer service at each center.

Program Objectives

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|---------------------|--|
| Objective 1. | Increase the number of visitors to Louisiana's welcome centers by 25% from 1.257 million in FY 2005/06 to 1.570 million in FY 2012/13. |
| Objective 2. | Maintain the average length of stay by welcome center visitors at 2.0 nights from FY 2005/06 to FY 2012/13. |

Program Objective 1.	Increase the number of visitors to Louisiana's welcome centers by 25% from 1.257 million in FY 2005/06 to 1.570 million in FY 2012/13.
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Strategies

- 1.1 Complete the renovation of all existing centers by the year 2010.
- 1.2 Maintain the current level of travel counselor staff at each welcome center and add additional counselors, maintenance personnel, and custodians to larger centers.
- 1.3 Provide a more inviting atmosphere to the exterior of the centers by improving the landscaping, adding interpretive exhibits, and enhancing the interior design by improving décor and adding wireless internet and informational kiosks at all highway centers by the year 2010.
- 1.4 Work with DOTD in providing 24-hour security officers at all interstate rest areas in which a Welcome Center resides.
- 1.5 Consider billboard advertising for the welcome centers on out-of-state interstate highways.

Indicators:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Input | Number of welcome center travel counselors.
Number of welcome centers. |
| Output | Number of welcome center visitors annually. |
| Outcome | Percentage increase in welcome center visitors. |
| Efficiency | Cost per visitor. |

Program Objective 2.	Maintain the average length of stay by welcome center visitors at 2.0 nights from FY 2005/06 to FY 2012/13.
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Strategies

- 2.1 Add new counselor exchange program and in-house training programs to each center, and incorporate FAM tours for the travel counselors.
- 2.2 Provide additional information to visitors through wireless portals and interpretive kiosks in the Welcome Centers by 2010.
- 2.3 Maintain adequate stocks of printed brochures to meet increased demand for travel information.
- 2.4 Provide promotional support to local convention and visitor bureau promotions within the areas of the welcome centers.
- 2.5 Provide safe and educational environment for visitors to the welcome centers.

Indicators

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Input | Number of welcome center travel counselors. |
| Output | Average length of stay for welcome center visitors. |

**Outcome
Efficiency**

**Percentage increase in the average length of stay.
Cost per visitor.**

Office of Tourism Supporting Documentation

A. Statement identifying the principal clients and users of each program and program objective and the specific service or benefit derived by such persons or organizations:

As specified in its enabling legislation, the Office of Tourism is established to help the Louisiana economy grow by promoting Louisiana as a travel destination, thereby helping the Louisiana travel industry. Therefore, the Office of Tourism's clients are hotels, restaurants, attractions, convention and visitor bureaus and others within the travel industry who depend on hospitality as their livelihood. Also, Louisiana visitors are the Office of Tourism's clients since they depend on the Office's literature for information about Louisiana, and they depend on the Office's Welcome Centers as a safe, clean environment in which to learn more about what Louisiana has to offer.

B. List of external variables:

The successful accomplishment of the goals and objectives described within this document is heavily dependent upon a number of external variables. For example, travel and tourism are dependent on a good economy within those geographic areas that produce Louisiana visitors.

Also, national and international lifestyle/lifestage trends can affect travel and tourism such as the increasing/decreasing amount of leisure time available or the increasing number of people over age 55 within the U.S. population. National and international transportation trends and/or crises such as airline disasters or airline fare wars can have either a positive or negative impact on travel to Louisiana. National and international man-made crises such as travel advisories due to war or terrorism can have an adverse impact; so can natural crises such as hurricanes, which may cause temporary but significant changes in travel patterns. National and international media stories about Louisiana may significantly alter awareness of Louisiana as a travel destination.

C. Statement of how duplication will be avoided when the operations of more than one program are directed at achieving a single goal, objective or strategy:

All three programs within the Office of Tourism work in coordination to accomplish all goals and objectives identified within this plan. There is no duplication; rather there is a dependence on one another to handle complex tasks that are integral to the program's success.

D. Statement of how the plan will derive management decisions and other agency processes:

The strategic planning process continues to provide the impetus for the agency to evaluate opportunities for improved and increased service to the public. Armed with a clear mission, thorough self-assessment and stakeholder analysis, the agency formulated strategies and priorities to achieve the goals described in the plan. As a result of the planning process, the agency has focused a new proactive approach to management of its resources. Annually, the agency will measure the

effectiveness of the strategies in the attainment of the desired outcomes. Based on the measurements, and taking into account the impact of any external variables, the agency will be able to determine the need to modify its strategies and reallocate resources.

E. Authorizations for each goal:

All goals within the Office of Tourism are authorized under R.S. 36:4, R.S. 36:201 et seq, R.S. 51:1251 et seq.

F. Documentation as to the validity, reliability and appropriateness of each performance indicator and how such will drive decision-making and other agency processes:

The following is a list of primary performance indicators and their rationale, validity, reliability and appropriateness:

1. Number of visitors to Louisiana - The number of U.S. residents taking a trip to or within Louisiana that is at least 50 miles away from their residence and the number of international residents who visit Louisiana while on their trip within the U.S. The source for U.S. resident visitors is the Travel Industry of America TRAVELSCOPE nationwide annual travel survey. The source for international visitors is the U.S. Department of Commerce In-Flight Survey of International Travelers to the U.S. and Statistics Canada's annual travel survey of Canadian residents. All sources are widely used within the travel industry and are valid and reliable sources.

2. Number of inquiries - The number of brochures and other materials sent to potential travelers who have requested further information as the result of an advertisement or by some other source. Inquiries are subdivided into several categories. For example, consumer inquiries are the result of advertising within consumer print publications and electronic media. Trade inquiries are the result of advertising within travel trade publications. Internet inquiries are those inquiries left on the Office of Tourism's web site. Mail inquiries are those inquiries received from inquirers who sent either a business reply card or a letter requesting travel information. Generating inquiries is a primary goal of advertising, therefore measuring the number of inquiries is a valid and effective method for determining the performance of advertising. Inquiry tracking reports are generated monthly by the Office of Tourism.

3. Amount of expenditures in Louisiana by all visitors - The exchange of money or the promise of money for goods or service while traveling, including any advance purchase of public transportation tickets, lodging or other items normally considered incidental to travel, but which may be purchased in advance of the trip. Expenditures are measured annually by the Travel Industry of America's Travel Economic Impact Model, the results of which are obtained by the Office of Tourism. The model has been used by the Office of Tourism for more than twenty years as a measurement of growth within the Louisiana travel industry.

4. Ad Recall from high BDI markets - Advertising recall from those areas which are most heavily

advertised. This indicator comes from the annual An Assessment of the Effectiveness of Louisiana's Tourism Advertising/Marketing Promotional Campaign. It is a qualified random sample mailed survey of households within those markets in which an adult in the household is asked a series of questions regarding Louisiana's advertising. Ad recall is an industry standard used for measuring the effectiveness of ad campaigns.

5. Number of people employed directly in travel and tourism - The number of jobs attributable to travel expenditures in Louisiana. These estimates are determined by the Travel Industry of America's Travel Economic Impact Model and are provided to the Office of Tourism annually along with expenditures and state taxes generated from visitor expenditures.

6. Average cost per inquiry packet - The advertising packet cost is determined by adding the following: a) the handling cost per packet derived from the ad agency fulfillment/telemarketing cost and dividing by the number of packets fulfilled, b) add the cost of the inquiry packet items (tour guide and map) and c) add the average postage cost.

7. Hotel Room Demand - The actual number of room nights sold for a period of time. The Office of Tourism uses the research from a national hospitality research company (Smith Travel Research) to determine the number of room nights sold by hotels in Louisiana. This figure is monitored on a monthly basis and comparisons are made with national trends as well as competing states. The percentage change in room nights sold provides an insight into increased tourism business in Louisiana.

8. Number of welcome center visitors - Visitors who enter any of Louisiana's 13 state welcome centers are asked to sign a registration sheet and record the number of people in their travel party, the state they are from and the number of nights they are planning to stay in Louisiana. These sheets are then compiled into monthly reports in which the number of visitors and their state/country of origin are recorded. These reports serve as a measurement of how many visitors have come into the center. Monthly, calendar year and fiscal year reports are developed and provide standard measures for periodic performance.

9. Cost per welcome center visitor - The amount of dollars spent for staffing and operating welcome centers divided by the number of welcome center visitors determines the cost per welcome center visitor. While some differences exist between centers due to location and highway traffic volume, this performance indicator is still valid when tracked through time.

10. Average length of stay for welcome center visitors - The average number of nights welcome center visitors stayed in Louisiana while on their trip to Louisiana. This indicator is determined by comparing the number of visitor parties with the number of nights each party stays in Louisiana. This information is obtained from the visitor sign-in sheet located in each welcome center and reported monthly to the Research Director.

11. Advertising Return on Investment (ROI) – A new indicator derived from a survey of recent

visitors to Louisiana. The ROI involves calculations of the following factors: 1) the number of Louisiana visitors' households who have seen a Louisiana advertisement and admitted that it had a positive impact on their trip, 2) average household expenditures on trip to Louisiana, 3) average expenditures for taxes from visitor spending and 4) actual spending by the Office of Tourism for advertising placement and production.

12. Number of inquiry packets mailed - This is very similar to the number of inquiries but is broken into categories by mail delivery such as bulk-rate packets, first-class packets and international packets. The mix of these packets has a significant impact on how much time it takes for inquirers get their LOT travel guide. For example, the large majority of travel guides are mailed using the U.S. Post Office's bulk rate system. This system is the least expensive method but is also the slowest. Domestic inquirers who do not indicate that their trip is within three weeks are sent travel guides using this method. Domestic inquirers who indicate that their trip is within three weeks of their request for information will receive their travel guide via first-class postage. International inquirers will be sent a travel guide via a private mail carrier.

G. Glossary of Terms

BDI – This is an abbreviation for Business Development Index. It is an indexing procedure used to prioritize geographic areas for marketing purposes. An area receiving a higher index value indicates a higher potential for receiving more visitors from that area.

CAP – Cooperative Advertising Program. A program which allows tourist bureaus and, in some instances, industry members to buy at a special rate into cooperative advertising pages in magazines and newspapers.

Cost per Inquiry – The cost associated with an advertisement (usually the placement cost only) divided by the number of inquiries. For example, Ad X costs \$5,900 to place within the March issue of Southern Travel magazine. The ad generated 1,000 inquiries from readers wanting a copy of the Louisiana Tour Guide. Therefore, the cost per inquiry for that ad was \$5.90.

CVB – Convention and Visitors Bureau. A CVB is a non-profit organization supported by transient-room taxes, government budget allocations, private memberships or a combination of any of these funding mechanisms. A CVB promotes tourism by encouraging groups to hold meetings, conventions and trade shows in its city.

Consumer Information Services – A division of the Louisiana Office of Tourism. The office coordinates the consumer inquiry process by providing free telephone services and mailing fulfillment, packages of promotional materials related to various inquiries. This division also conducts conversion and market research.

Eco-cultural Tourism – Tourism activities involving outdoor recreation, historical sites and museums, cultural events and places and other similar behavior.

FAM – Familiarization Tour. A complimentary or reduced-rate travel program for group tour operators, travel agents, travel writers, etc. designed to acquaint them with a specific destination in order to promote sales for that area. The suppliers on the itinerary usually provide their services at no charge. Area or state tourist commissions usually organize FAM tours.

LTPA – Louisiana Travel Promotion Association. A non-profit, private-sector trade association representing the state's travel and hospitality industry. LTPA offers cooperative programs to assist businesses by helping to assess needs and planning marketing strategies.

Louisiana Tour Guide – The primary fulfillment piece for LOT, the Louisiana Tour Guide is sent to more than a million people who call or write to express an interest in visiting Louisiana. The guide contains helpful information and advertising which is available to any tourism business. This piece is published annually in January.

Media Placement Budget – The amount of money used for buying advertising in television media (time) and print media (space). This budget does not include the actual production (design, photos, etc.) of the ad.

Sales Blitz – A marketing strategy in which a number of coordinated promotions are conducted sequentially either in an area with high market potential and/or directed at a group of people with great potential to bring a large volume of people to Louisiana. For example, for a sales blitz directed at French-speaking Canadians, Louisiana tourism officials may travel to Canada and participate in various radio and TV shows, a travel trade reception and direct meetings with key tour operators.

Scenic Byways – Part of a federal/state program to preserve rich rural heritage. Roads that receive this prestigious designation must meet stringent national standards. The byways, which cross almost every area of the state, cover many of Louisiana's most beautiful scenery.

Tour Operators – A company which creates and/or markets inclusive tours whose responsibilities include advertising, selling, folder distribution and reservation operations of a tour. Many tour operators sell through travel agents and directly to clients.

Tourism – The business of providing and marketing services and facilities for travelers.

Travel Agent – A company or individual selling travel services and representing transportation, accommodation and/or tour operators.

Travel Summit – An annual statewide conference sponsored by the Louisiana Travel Promotion Association in which the Louisiana travel industry meets to exchange ideas and plans for promoting tourism.

Visitor – A visitor is any person who travels at least 50 miles from his residence for the purpose of

entertainment, vacation, personal business and/or attending a meeting, conference, seminar or some other business function that is not routine. Travel involving commuting to work, foreign students, seasonal employment or any routine work-related travel (such as pilots or delivery truck drivers) is not recorded as travel/tourism.

Welcome Center – A program within the Office of Tourism that provides direct information to potential and actual visitors to Louisiana via the 10 state welcome centers around the state (six are on interstate highways near the state's borders, two are on major U.S. highways near Vidalia and St. Francisville, and two are in major cities: New Orleans and Baton Rouge).

H. Program evaluation used to develop objectives and strategies:

In establishing its objectives and strategies, the agency referred to the *Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism's Annual Report*. Also, numerous other reports were consulted to determine performance indicators, such as *The Economic Impact of Travel on Louisiana Parishes, 2005*; *An Assessment of the Effectiveness of Louisiana's 2005 Tourism Advertising/Marketing Promotional Campaign*.